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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR BURNS/SATTERFIELD/DIBBLE;
NEA/SA/EX FOR RICHIE; DEPT FOR DS/IP/ITA; DEPT FOR
DS/IP/NEA;
NSC FOR ABRAMS/DANIN; USAID FOR DCHA, DCHA/FPP, PRM FOR
DEWEY/GREENE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [GZ](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: IDF RAIDS WB QASSAM ROCKET WORKSHOP;
NO INJURIES REPORTED FROM THREE WEST BANK EXPLOSIONS --
MARCH 3, 2005 (1200 HOURS LOCAL)

This is a joint ConGen Jerusalem/Embassy Tel Aviv cable.

1. (SBU) Summary: A car bomb exploded without causing injuries March 3 near IDF soldiers patrolling in the vicinity of Joseph's Tomb in Nablus. Jewish worshippers were near the area at the time of the explosion. In addition, two explosive devices detonated without causing injury near IDF soldiers operating in the Balata refugee camp, near Nablus. The IDF on March 2 raided a metal works shop in the village of al-Yamun, near Jenin, where soldiers discovered a Qassam rocket under construction. The IDF also confiscated explosive devices and ammunition. According to Israeli press reports, the IDF in late January had arrested 14 members of Hamas in the West Bank on suspicion of planning to launch Qassam rockets into Israel. In Gaza, IDF tank fire injured a 13-year-old Palestinian boy in Rafah March 2. End Summary.

West Bank

2. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: A Palestinian teenager died March 2 from wounds received during clashes with IDF 18 months ago in Jenin.

-- Injuries: Two Israeli settlers on March 2 sustained light injuries after Palestinians threw two firebombs at their vehicle traveling near the Ofra settlement, north of Ramallah.

-- Injury: A Palestinian reported March 2 that he had been shot by Israeli settlers traveling in a passing vehicle in the vicinity of Ramin, east of Tulkarm.

-- Attacks: A car bomb exploded March 3 near IDF soldiers patrolling in the vicinity of Joseph's Tomb in Nablus. Jewish worshippers were near the area at the time of the explosion. In addition, two explosive devices detonated near IDF soldiers operating in the Balata refugee camp, near Nablus. None of the explosions resulted in injuries.

3. (SBU) ARRESTS/SECURITY:

-- Arrests: The IDF overnight March 2-3 arrested five Palestinians, including four Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) activists in the Nablus, Qalqiliya, and Tulkarm areas.

-- Arrest: The IDF the evening of March 2 arrested a Fatah Tanzim activist during an operation south of Nablus.

-- Security Incident: The IDF on March 2 raided a metal works shop in the village of al-Yamun, near Jenin, where soldiers discovered a Qassam rocket under construction. The IDF also confiscated explosive devices and ammunition. According to Israeli press reports, the IDF in late January had arrested 14 members of Hamas in the West Bank on suspicion of planning to launch Qassam rockets into Israel.

-- Incursion: The IDF on March 3 entered the eastern sector of Jenin. As of 1200 hours, there were no reports of arrests or injuries from this operation.

4. (SBU) DEMOLITIONS/CONFISCATIONS

-- Palestinian media reported that the Israeli Civil Administration distributed confiscation orders for up to 10,000 dunams of Palestinian land belonging to Palestinians south and west of Hebron in order to construct the separation barrier. According to Abd al-Hadi Hantash, head of the Palestinian land defense committee in the Hebron area, confiscation orders include 3,000 dunams from Dhahirirya villagers for barrier construction in the area of Eshkolot settlement, 1,500 dunams from Ar-Ramadin and Arab al-Fureijat villagers for barrier construction around Sansana settlement, 5,000 dunams from As Samu, villagers for barrier

construction by Mezadot Yehuda and Shani settlements. (Note: Posts will investigate to verify the details of this report. End Note).

15. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- According to Palestinian press reports, the PA Governor of Jenin denied that PA Interior Minister Nasir Yusif had fired him. An official from the Interior Ministry confirmed that the Jenin Governor had not been replaced, but stated that 11 security chiefs and deputies had been removed from their positions during Yusif's March 1 visit to the city.

-- PA President Abbas is planning to meet with representatives from PIJ upon his return to the West Bank. Abbas is scheduled to meet March 3 with Egyptian President Mubarak in Cairo.

-- PA Minister for Civil Affairs Dahlan met March 2 with Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Peres. A statement released by the Civil Affairs Ministry indicated that Dahlan had submitted a number of requests to Peres, including a request for an increase in the number of Palestinian laborers allowed to enter Israel. Other Palestinian media reports stated that Dahlan and Peres discussed the mechanisms of coordination for the Gaza Disengagement Plan.

Gaza

16. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Nil.

-- Injuries: UNRWA reported that IDF tank fire injured a 13-year-old Palestinian boy in Rafah, across from Rafiah Yam settlement, March 2, when he and a group of boys entered a leveled area to play football.

-- Mortars/Rockets: Nil.

-- Shootings: Nil.

-- Explosions: Nil.

17. (SBU) PALESTINIAN SECURITY:

-- UNRWA reported that a dispute between Force 17 officers turned violent in Gaza City March 2. According to reports, a newly-dismissed officer refused to relinquish his command in the Ansar area to his successor. Bodyguards loyal to each officer clashed for about an hour firing small arms, until APCs moved into the area and the situation was brought under control. No injuries were reported.

18. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS:

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open March 3, with a major detour at Netzarim Junction. Only public transportation is allowed to cross Abu Khouli checkpoint.

-- Erez Crossing was open for internationals and for a limited number of Palestinians March 2, and 1,030 laborers and 128 merchants crossed into Israel.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone was open March 2, and 332 laborers entered.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers March 3, but was open for the import of aggregates used in construction.

-- Karni Terminal was partially open March 3.

-- Rafah Terminal was open for arrivals and departures March 3.

-- Tel al-Sultan checkpoint was closed March 3. Toufah checkpoint was open for residents of al-Mowassi, except for males between the ages of 16-35.

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